

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of producing an alternate referrer page substantially similar to a referrer page previously viewed, through a web browser, by a visitor who linked to a target web page via a link on the previously viewed referrer page, the method comprising, when the web browser links to the target web page:
 - (a) obtaining a referrer URL for the web page from which the web browser loaded the target web page; and,
 - (b) issuing a request for a web page corresponding to the referrer URL to obtain the alternate referrer page.
2. A method as defined in claim 1, further comprising:
 - (a) obtaining the IP address of the computer running the web browser;
 - (b) determining a country code corresponding to the IP address; and,
 - (c) issuing the request for a web page corresponding to the referrer URL through a computer located in a geographic region corresponding to the country code.
3. A method as defined in claim 1, further comprising:
 - (a) locating, in the previously produced referrer page, a target URL for the target web page;
 - (b) determining the target URL's position within the previously produced referrer page; and,
 - (c) storing the target URL and the target URL's position.
4. A method as defined in claim 3, further comprising obtaining the referrer URL by embedding a web browser-executable code

module in the target web page and executing the code module when the web browser loads the target web page.

5. A method as defined in claim 1, further comprising:
 - 5 (a) caching the alternate referrer page for a predetermined time interval;
 - (b) if another visitor links to the target web page within the predetermined time interval, determining whether the referrer URL obtained for said another visitor corresponds to the cached referrer page; and,
 - 10 (c) if the referrer URL obtained for said another visitor corresponds to the cached referrer page, providing the cached referrer page as the alternate referrer page without issuing a request for a web page corresponding to the referrer URL.
- 15 6. A method as defined in claim 1, further comprising delaying for a time interval shorter than a predetermined time interval, issuing the request for a web page corresponding to the referrer URL.
- 20 7. A method of producing alternate referrer pages substantially similar to referrer pages previously viewed, through a web browser, by a visitor who linked to a target web page via a link on the previously viewed referrer pages, the method comprising, when the web browser links to the target web page:
 - 25 (a) obtaining a referrer URL for the web page from which the web browser loaded the target web page;
 - (b) obtaining the IP address of the computer running the web browser;
 - (c) determining a country code corresponding to the IP address;
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- (d) creating a queue entry containing the referrer URL and the country code;
 - (e) inspecting the queue at predefined time intervals to determine whether the queue contains an unexamined entry; and,
 - 5 (f) if the queue contains an unexamined entry, issuing a request for the referrer URL contained in the unexamined entry through a computer located in a geographic region corresponding to the country code contained in the unexamined entry, to obtain the alternate referrer pages.
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8. A method of producing alternate search engine search results pages substantially similar to search engine search results pages previously viewed, through a web browser, by a visitor who
- 15 target web page via a link on the previously viewed search engine search results pages, the method comprising, when the web browser links to the target web page:
- (a) obtaining a referrer URL for the web page from which the web browser loaded the target web page;
 - 20 (b) parsing the referrer URL to determine whether the referrer URL contains a search engine identifier for a predefined search engine;
 - (c) if the referrer URL contains a search engine identifier for a predefined search engine, further parsing the referrer URL
 - 25 to locate any keywords contained in the referrer URL; and,
 - (d) if the referrer URL contains any keywords, issuing to the predefined search engine a search request for the keywords contained in the referrer URL to obtain the alternate search engine search results pages from the search engine.
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9. A method as defined in claim 8, further comprising:

- (a) obtaining the IP address of the computer running the web browser;
 - (b) determining a country code corresponding to the IP address; and,
 - 5 (c) issuing the search request to the predefined search engine through a computer located in a geographic region corresponding to the country code.

- 10 10. A method as defined in claim 8, further comprising:
 - (a) searching the alternate search engine search results pages to locate a target URL for the target web page within the alternate search engine search results pages;
 - (b) determining the target URL's position relative to the start
15 of the alternate search engine search results pages and assigning that position as the target URL's rank; and,
 - (c) storing the target URL, the target URL's rank, the keywords and the search engine identifier.

- 20 11. A method as defined in claim 10, further comprising, before parsing the referrer URL to determine whether the referrer URL contains a search engine identifier:
 - (a) extracting site ID and domain ID parameters from the target URL; and,
 - 25 (b) if the extracted site ID and domain ID parameters do not correspond to a predefined target web page, terminating the method.

- 30 12. A method as defined in claim 10, further comprising obtaining the referrer URL by embedding a web browser-executable code

module in the target web page and executing the code module when the web browser loads the target web page.

13. A method as defined in claim 8, further comprising:
- 5 (a) caching the alternate search engine search results pages for a predetermined time interval;
- (b) if another visitor links to the target web page within the predetermined time interval, determining whether the referrer URL obtained for said another visitor corresponds to the cached search engine search results pages; and,
- 10 (c) if the referrer URL obtained for said another visitor corresponds to the cached search engine search results pages, providing the cached search engine search results pages as the alternate search engine search results pages without
- 15 issuing a search request to the predefined search engine.
14. A method as defined in claim 8, further comprising delaying for a time interval shorter than a predetermined time interval, issuing a search request to the predefined search engine.
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15. A method of producing alternate search engine search results pages substantially similar to search engine search results pages previously viewed, through a web browser, by a visitor who supplied one or more keywords to a search engine and linked to a target web page via a link on the previously viewed search engine search results pages, the method comprising, when the web
- 25 browser links to the target web page:
- (a) obtaining a referrer URL for the web page from which the web browser loaded the target web page;

- (b) parsing the referrer URL to determine whether the referrer URL contains a search engine identifier for a predefined search engine;
- 5 (c) if the referrer URL contains a search engine identifier for a predefined search engine, further parsing the referrer URL to locate any keywords contained in the referrer URL;
- (d) obtaining the IP address of the computer running the web browser and determining a country code corresponding to the IP address;
- 10 (e) creating a queue entry containing the referrer URL, the search engine identifier, the keywords and the country code;
- (f) inspecting the queue at predefined time intervals to determine whether the queue contains an unexamined entry; and,
- 15 (g) if the queue contains an unexamined entry, issuing to the predefined search engine, through a computer located in a geographic region corresponding to the country code contained in the unexamined entry, a search request for the keywords in the referrer URL contained in the unexamined entry to obtain the alternate search engine search results
- 20 pages.